



U.S. Department of Justice  
United States Attorney  
District of Kansas

## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### DIRECTOR OF CENTURY II CONVENTION CENTER INDICTED

WICHITA, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced that **Larry Lahaie**, 48, Wichita, Kansas, Director of Century II Convention Center and Wichita city employee, was charged today by a federal grand jury in Wichita, Kansas, with one count of making a false statement to the FBI and two counts of theft or bribery concerning programs receiving federal funds.

Melgren stated that **Lahaie** is scheduled to make his initial appearance in U.S. District Court in Wichita, Kansas, on December 10, 2003, at 9:30 a.m.

The indictment alleges that in June of 2002 Lahaie was hired as the director of Century II and it was his responsibility to oversee the Central Ticket Agency, a private contractor with the City of Wichita that sold tickets for Century II events and collected and disbursed ticket money, and the Wichita Canteen Company, a catering business that provided food service at Century II events. The indictment alleges that Lahaie reported directly to the Director of Park and Recreation for the City and the Director of Park and Recreation reported directly to the City Manager. The indictment alleges that it was Lahaie's responsibility to oversee and resolve any problems with the Central Ticket Agency and the Wichita Canteen Company on behalf of the City of Wichita. The indictment further alleges that Lahaie had direct contact with Central Ticket Agency and Wichita Canteen Company personnel on behalf of the City of Wichita.

The indictment alleges that in June of 2002 Lahaie was aware that Central Ticket Agency was behind in paying the money it owed for Century II events and for rent to the City of Wichita. The indictment further alleges that from sometime in 2002 and continuing until April of 2003 Lahaie solicited money in amounts between \$5,400 and \$9,280 from the Central Ticket Agency, during which time the Central Ticket Agency was not compelled to pay the City of Wichita all of the money owed for events or rent.

The indictment alleges that in the fall of 2002, a meeting was held at Century II with officials from the Kansas Coliseum, a building complex owned by Sedgwick County, the

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discussed approximately \$40,000 that was owed by Central Ticket Agency to Select-A-Seat, an organization that handles ticket sales for the Kansas Coliseum. The indictment alleges that during this meeting the Kansas Coliseum announced it would no longer do business with Central Ticket Agency. The indictment further alleges that Lahaie continued the City of Wichita's relationship with Central Ticket Agency even though Central Ticket Agency owed the City of Wichita money.

During May of 2003, Central Ticket Agency informed the City of Wichita that it was closing. The indictment alleges that at that time, Central Ticket Agency owed the City of Wichita approximately \$47,000.

The indictment also alleges that sometime before June 24, 2003, an employee of the Wichita Canteen Company contacted Lahaie and discussed raising the prices of food services at Century II. This would generate additional revenue for the City since the City received a commission off the money generated by Wichita Canteen Company at Century II. Sometime after June 24, 2003, Lahaie approved Wichita Canteen Company's increased price structure.

The indictment further alleges that sometime between August 18 and 22, 2003, Lahaie contacted the same employee at Wichita Canteen Company and asked for \$9,280. The indictment alleges that on August 22, 2003, the Wichita Canteen Company provided Lahaie a cashiers check for \$9,280 and Lahaie signed a paper stating that he would repay the \$9,280 in thirty days or pay interest thereafter. The indictment further alleges that on August 21, 2003, Lahaie signed a letter with the same Wichita Canteen Company employee authorizing Wichita Canteen Company to use the Century II kitchen for other Wichita Canteen Company clients in return for the City receiving a five per cent commission on these sales. The indictment further alleges that on September 20, 2003, Lahaie paid the Wichita Canteen Company \$9,280.

The indictment alleges that on September 2, 2003, Lahaie made a false statement to the FBI when he stated he did not know about Central Ticket Agency loaning money to people when Lahaie knew that he had solicited money from the Central Ticket Agency. The indictment further alleges that from July 2, 2002, through August 22, 2003, Lahaie, while an agent of the City of Wichita, a local government that received benefits in excess of \$10,000 in federal funding, corruptly solicited and corruptly accepted something of value from Central Ticket Agency and the Wichita Canteen Company.

If convicted, Lahaie faces a maximum of five years in federal prison, without parole, for making a false statement and a maximum of ten years for theft or bribery concerning programs receiving federal funds. The case was investigated by the FBI and the Wichita Police Department. A copy of the indictment may be picked up in the reception area of the U.S. Attorney's Office at 1200 Epic Center, 301 N. Main, Wichita, Kansas, or by email on request.

As in any criminal case, a person is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The charges filed merely contain allegations of criminal conduct.